

Market-by-market sweeps: It's ABC, NBC and CBS

Surprise in data is NBC edging CBS out for second place

The May 1984 prime time market-by-market Arbitron analysis confirms what the national ratings showed all along: ABC won the May sweeps, the only network to post a gain over the same period a year ago. The surprise comes in Arbitron analysis supplied by both ABC and CBS, which shows NBC, not CBS, as the second-ranked network in total households during May. CBS, according to both ABC and CBS analysis, came in third. And, reported ABC researchers, ABC was the only network to gain in total adults, 18-49, during the May sweeps, while both CBS and NBC declined.

NBC said that it placed second to ABC in both women, 18-49, and men, 18-49. According to NBC researchers, NBC in prime time drew an average of 5,870,000 for women, 18-49, which was down 7% over last year. But CBS, NBC said, was down 12% in women, 18-49, drawing an average 4,980,000. ABC was still the leader, however, attracting 6,421,000 women, 18-49 (up 6%), NBC said. As for men, 18-49, NBC reported it was down 5% from May 1983 by recording 5,062,000 viewers in that category, compared to CBS, down 14% with 3,849,000. Again, NBC figures showed, ABC came in first with women, 18-49, averaging 5,102,000 viewers (up 2%).

Some caveats: Neither of the networks disputes the order in which they were ranked during the May sweeps. They only disagree on the margin of victory, principally due to slightly different computation methods. The results are based on Arbitron-supplied ratings from 147 markets in which each of the networks has a full affiliate. (Last year there were 145 Arbitron-defined markets because Harrisburg-Lancaster-York, Pa., was treated as one three-station market.) The ratings analysis is based on only those cleared prime time periods when all three networks were programing directly against one another; lo-

cal programing run on the affiliates in prime time is factored out.

However, ABC's computations included programs that extended past prime time (11 p.m. EST) or were delayed locally and shown in other dayparts. CBS, on the other hand, does not include either runovers or delayed broadcasts in its computations.

Some highlights of the May sweeps, according to CBS, included:

■ A virtual tie between CBS and NBC, with NBC drawing 11,137,000 households per quarter hour compared to 11,074,000 for CBS. Both, however, were about 14% below ABC's 12,943,000 households per quarter hour.

■ Compared to May 1983, the ABC audience rose 5.9%, from 12,221,000 households per quarter hour to 12,943,000. However, CBS's per-quarter-hour household audience dropped 11.5%, from 12,506,000 in 1983 to 11,074,000 in May 1984, and NBC's slipped 9.8%, from 12,343,000 to 11,137,000.

■ Combined network viewership fell 5.2% in May-to-May comparisons, from 37,070,000 to 35,154,000. However, since the total U.S. household population has increased 0.6% (83,642,600 to 83,971,800 from 1982-83 to 1983-84), the combined network decline is actually a 5.4% loss.

The ABC analysis came in lower than the CBS analysis—both in measuring itself and the competition. According to ABC:

■ The CBS-NBC margin was wider—NBC came out 555,000 households ahead (CBS estimated 63,000 ahead), with NBC drawing 11,809,000 households per quarter hour compared to 11,254,000 for CBS. ABC, estimated its own researchers, carried 13,087,000 per quarter hour. However, based on ABC's numbers, CBS lagged 14% behind ABC while NBC fell only 10% short in quarter-hour viewing.

■ Compared to May 1983, ABC estimated its audience rose 5.1%, from 12,452,000 households per quarter hour to 13,087,000.

However, CBS's per-quarter-hour household audience dropped 9.9%, from 12,494,000 in May 1983 to 11,254,000 in May 1984, and CBS dropped 7.9%, from 12,823,000 to 11,809,000.

■ ABC also didn't see the combined network viewership loss as great as did CBS. CBS recorded a 4.3% erosion, from 37,769,000 to 36,150,000 in May-to-May comparisons.

During prime time in May, CBS concurred with ABC that the latter had the overwhelming number of affiliates in first place—more than CBS's and NBC's first place showings combined, in fact. According to CBS, ABC led 81 markets, while CBS followed in 37 and NBC in 29. ABC said that ABC came in first in 82 markets, CBS was top in 38 and NBC in 31. (ABC's first-place markets add to 151 compared to 147 for CBS because of ties.)

This is the reverse of last year when, according to CBS, CBS was ranked first in 60.5 markets, compared to 42.5 for NBC and 42 for ABC. (CBS uses a split-point system for ties.) Last year, ABC reported it was first in 43 markets, compared to 59 for CBS and 44 for NBC.

CBS also noted that in the May 1984 sweeps, based on seven-day averages from 9 a.m. to midnight, CBS led in 71 markets, compared to 42.5 for ABC and 33.5 for NBC—or in nearly 50% of the markets.

The following chart was developed by BROADCASTING from compilations of Arbitron market-by-market reports supplied by CBS. Household numbers are in thousands (000) per average quarter hour (8-11 p.m., Monday-Saturday; 7-11 p.m., Sunday). Boldface numbers indicate a market winner. A dash (—) indicates no primary affiliate in the market. An asterisk shows a new station in the market or an affiliation change between May 1983 and May 1984 sweeps. Not included are markets that Arbitron does not measure, including those in Hawaii, Alaska and St. Thomas, V.I.

ADI (rank)	1984 households (000)			ADI (rank)	1984 households (000)		
	ABC	CBS	NBC		ABC	CBS	NBC
Abilene-Sweetwater, Tex. (155)	14	14	20	Baltimore (21)	174	119	141
Albany, Ga. (150)	7	—	52	Bangor, Me. (156)	20	20	17
Albany-Schenectady-Troy, N.Y. (51)	74	72	63	Baton Rouge (91)	66	50	32
Albuquerque, N.M. (62)	60	37	50	Beaumont-Port Arthur, Tex. (120)	36	37	31
Alexandria, La. (163)	—	—	33	Bend, Ore. (203)	—	5	—
Alexandria, Minn. (178)	—	30	—	Billings-Hardin, Mont. (169)	15	13	5
Alpena, Mich. (208)	—	7	—	Biloxi-Gulfport-Pascagoula, Miss. (179)	36	—	—
Amarillo, Tex. (115)	33	22	25	Binghamton, N.Y. (134)	11	36	16
Anniston, Ala. (192)	—	11	—	Birmingham, Ala. (48)	119	35	91
Ardmore-Ada, Okla. (172)	12	24	—	Bluefield-Beckley-Oak Hill, W.Va. (131)	25	—	22
Atlanta (16)	171	143	129	Boise, Idaho (137)	26	18	24
Augusta, Ga. (103)	48	36	26	Boston (6)	291	248	304
Austin, Tex. (82)	37	40	27	Bowling Green, Ky. (187)	23	—	—
Bakersfield, Calif. (147)	26	18	16	Bristol, Va.-Kingsport, Johnson City, Tenn. (87)	26	44	68